

Eventually Disraeli decided to enter on a third contest at Wycombe, the other candidates being his old opponents Smith and Grey. To Wycombe accordingly he repaired, and delivered¹ a long speech on the situation, which he at once reissued as a pamphlet under the title of 'The Crisis Examined.' This speech has an important place in the story of Disraeli's political development. He begins with the usual assurance of the fixity of his principles. Since he last addressed them 'great revolutions have occurred — revolutions of government and revolutions of opinion : I can, however, assure you that I remain unchanged.' But as he cannot condescend to obtain even the honour of a seat in Parliament 'by Jesuitical intrigue or casuistical cajolery,' as he 'cannot condescend at the same time to be supported by the Tories because they deem, me a Tory, and by the Liberals because they hold me a Liberal,' he proceeds to unfold his programme as adapted to the new circumstances which have arisen. In the foreground stands relief for the agricultural interest, which is suffering from severe depression. 'We may hope that the Exchequer may grant them at least the partial relief of the malt tax, although I recommend them to petition for the whole. I would not at the same time make a request and intimate a compromise.' The popular cry of the country is Church Reform ; but he dislikes that 'cant phrase,' and hopes to hear less of Church reform and more of Church improvement. Pluralities must be abolished, the great evil of non-residence must be terminated, and to achieve these all-important objects there must be an increase in 'the value of the lesser livings and the incomes in general of the inferior clergy.' Church reform leads him on to Ireland.

I deem it absolutely necessary, even for the existence of the Protestant Establishment itself, that the question of the Irish Church should be forthwith grappled with; that it

¹ On December 16.